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SCIENCE

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THE PRESENT POSITION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY IN GREAT BRITAIN¹

FOR the third time in succession the Section meets under the shadow of the war cloud, but there is some slight consolation for the indescribable suffering and sorrow which have been imposed upon millions of our fellow creatures in the hope and belief that this cloud also may have a silver lining. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that nothing less than such an upheaval of existing habits and traditions as has been caused by the war would have sufficed to arouse the British nation from the state of apathy towards science with which it has been fatuously contented in the past. Now, however, the sleeper has at least stirred in his slumber. The press bears witness, through the appearance of innumerable articles and letters, that the people of this country, and even the politicians, have begun to perceive the dangers which will inevitably result from a continuance of their former attitude, and to understand that in peace, as in war, civilization is at a tremendous disadvantage in the struggle for existence unless armed by science, and that the future prosperity of the empire is ultimately dependent upon the progress of science, and very specially of chemistry. If, as one result of the war, our people are led to appreciate the value of scientific work, then perhaps we shall not have paid too high a price, high although the price must be. As concerns our own branch of science,

¹ Address before the Chemical Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1916.

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